

DISPLAYS

FAQ

Q What would you say is the best input to use for HD on my display?

A To display HD footage, you'll need a display capable of displaying at least a resolution of 1,280x720; a projector with a resolution of 1,280x1,024 could do this, for example. As HD footage is stored digitally and your HD display is digital, you should use a DVI or HDMI digital connection; you can use a convertor to change HDMI to DVI, or vice versa. Using digital-to-digital means you don't need any analogue-to-digital or digital-to-analogue conversions, which reduce quality.

If you're hoping to use a PC to play HD on your TV, you can run into problems, as not all HD TVs' HDMI inputs accept a PC's input. Visit www.avforums.com to read about other users' experiences. You may have to use the analogue VGA input instead, which will still give you a decent image.

Analogue component inputs are the final way of getting HD to your TV. While quality won't be as high as with a digital connection, you'll still get a good picture from a Sky box, HD DVD or Blu-ray player.

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VIEWSONIC N2060w

★★★★★

£299 inc VAT

ViewSonic's 20in N2060w is the smallest HD TV that we've reviewed and it looks diminutive compared to the 26in and 32in TVs that we're used to reviewing. However, costing just £299, this widescreen television will appeal if you can't afford a bigger TV or you're looking for a second set for the bedroom or study.

The N2060w sits on a fixed stand that has no tilt or height adjustment. However, we were impressed with the viewing angles. You should find that, no matter where you are seated in a small room, you'll be able to see the picture clearly and without any loss of contrast.

The N2060w has only an analogue tuner, rather than Freeview. Reception was quite good, with a reasonably clear picture. Unfortunately, the tuner failed to find Channel Five automatically using our aerial, which is something other TVs we've reviewed haven't struggled with. However, it's likely that you'll want to buy a separate Freeview set-top box.

The N2060w has a VGA port for connecting to a PC. Although the image quality isn't pin sharp, it will display the Windows desktop at close to its native resolution of 1,360x768. This is standard, as Windows doesn't support the TV's native resolution of 1,366x768. Picture quality wasn't very good, with small fonts being hard to read, while skin tones appeared too orange and didn't look natural.

The manual does not suggest connecting the display to a PC using the HDMI connector, but we did anyway with the help of an HDMI-to-DVI cable. The resulting image wasn't great and would work in Windows only at a resolution of 1,024x768. This means the input is of use to standalone players only.



We tested DVD playback using the component input and the TV did well. Colours were good and the picture was detailed and sharp. Other connections include SCART, S-video and composite. We tested the ability of the N2060w's video-signal processor to display interlaced broadcasts, as a lot of video is still delivered in this format. Unfortunately, it didn't do so well here. There is no noise-reduction feature and this showed with a lot of speckling appearing in solid areas such as sky. There was also some ghosting on fast-moving images.

ViewSonic's N2060w is a good HD TV for the price, and it is one that you can connect to a PC via VGA if you really need to. If you are on a tight budget or you need a small screen, it's a good choice. If you can stretch a lot further, however, then Samsung's 26in LE2674BD is well worth the extra £250 and it has excellent picture quality from all inputs.

Lynley Oram

SUMMARY

- ✓ Inexpensive
- ✓ Good HD image quality
- ✗ Poor performance connected to PC

20in LCD HD TV 1,366x768 native resolution, 16:9 aspect ratio, 8ms response time (grey-to-grey), 1,000:1 contrast ratio, VGA, HDMI, composite, component, S-video, 1x SCART
PART CODE N2060W
SUPPLIER www.pcworld.co.uk
DETAILS www.viewsoniceurope.com/uk

Also consider...

SAMSUNG 215TW

★★★★★

£343 inc VAT

Samsung's 215TW is a top-quality monitor that's perfectly suited to home and work use. Viewing angles are excellent and the picture quality cannot be faulted. It has a comprehensive range of connections, including S-video, composite, component, DVI and D-sub. There's a picture-in-picture option, too, so you can watch DVDs while you work.

21in LCD 1,680x1,050 resolution, 8ms response time, 1,000:1 contrast ratio, D-sub, DVI, S-video, composite and component inputs
PART CODE SAMQDPWASQ
SUPPLIER www.pixmania.com
DETAILS www.samsung.co.uk
✓ Excellent picture quality ✗ Pricy
FULL REVIEW Sep 2006



IYYAMA X486S-B1

★★★★★

£196 inc VAT

Iiyama's X486S-B1 is a tastefully designed display. It has a reflective coating, which makes colours look richer and blacks look darker. An ambient light sensor automatically adjusts the monitor's brightness according to the room's light level, while an infrared sensor detects when you're in front of the monitor and turns it off to save power when you're not.

19in LCD 1,280x1,024 resolution, 700:1 contrast ratio, 2ms response time, D-sub, DVI, USB2 port PART CODE X486SB1
SUPPLIER www.morecomputers.co.uk
DETAILS www.iiyama.co.uk
✓ Good picture quality ✗ Auto-brightness feature doesn't work very well
FULL REVIEW Feb 2007



HP LP2065

★★★★★

£304 inc VAT

HP's LP2065 looks classy, with a thin silver bezel and minimalist design. The screen can pivot, there's a four-port USB2 hub built in and it has two DVI inputs. Whites are pure and bright, and high-contrast images are impeccably reproduced. The screen is a little more expensive than most, but it's a price worth paying to get the best image quality.

20in LCD 1,600x1,200 native resolution, 2x DVI inputs, four-port USB2 hub PART CODE EF227AT
SUPPLIER www.pcwb.com
DETAILS www.hp.com/uk
✓ Good design; excellent brightness and contrast; handy USB2 hub
FULL REVIEW Aug 2006



FORMAC

Gallery 2010 Xtreme-5

★★★★★

£457 inc VAT

Formac's Gallery 2010 Xtreme-5 is a strikingly designed monitor, but not everyone will like it. Rather than sitting on a pedestal and stand, the Xtreme-5 looks more like an oversized picture frame. The 20.1in screen is set in a plastic surround that sits directly on the desk, propped up from behind by the hinged stand. This gives the screen a lot more tilt than other monitors, but it is not height adjustable. This inflexibility works against the Xtreme-5. Other monitors in this price range have both considerable tilt and height adjustment available.

The Gallery has captive DVI, USB (for the two-port USB2 hub) and power cables, so if anything does go wrong then you cannot just replace the cables. For a monitor of this price, we would expect removable cabling. It's also a shame that the cables are white, as they stand out from the black monitor. The cables look better on the silver and white version, though.

On the front of the display are two dedicated buttons for adjusting the brightness and contrast. According to Formac, the monitor leaves the factory tuned to perform straight out of the box. It's likely, though, that you'll want to adjust the settings to suit your personal preference.

All our criticisms are cosmetic. For accurate and natural colours, the Xtreme-5 is hard to beat. It is well suited to professional users such as designers and photographers. Skin tones in our photos – something that many monitors find difficult to



reproduce accurately – were realistic. Our test video clips were displayed with vibrant and rich colours. Text was incredibly sharp and readable even down to the smallest of font sizes. Games players will also like this display, as details in fast, action-packed games were sharply defined with no ghosting or streaking.

We were also impressed with the viewing angle of this monitor. We didn't see any loss of quality in the image produced when stepping to the side of the display, or tilting the screen right back.

The Xtreme-5's image quality is simply superb and it is a great choice if you are doing a lot of professional video or photo-editing work. However, it is incredibly expensive. HP's LP2065 (see 'Also consider...' below) has a four-port USB2 hub, an extra DVI port and near-identical image quality. For most people the LP2065 will make more sense, particularly as it is £153 cheaper.

Lynley Oram

SUMMARY

- ✓ Superb picture quality
- ✓ Realistic skin tones
- ✗ Expensive

20.1in LCD 1,600x1,200 resolution, 700:1 contrast ratio, 8ms response time (grey-to-grey), DVI, two-port USB2 hub
PART CODE FDGS2010-3U
SUPPLIER www.ebuyer.com
DETAILS www.formac.co.uk

CHOOSING A...
Projector

Follow the steps to find your ideal specs

NATIVE RESOLUTION: 1,024x768
BRIGHTNESS: 1,000 ANSI lumens
CONTRAST RATIO: 500:1
LAMP LIFE: 2,000 hours
CHECK: Weight, throw distance, noise
Recommended minimum in grey

1 Low-cost projectors make two main sacrifices. The brightness, measured in ANSI lumens, will be relatively low and the native resolution will be limited to 1,024x768. Neither need be serious drawbacks if you want to use your projector for presentations or DVDs.

If you want to be ready for High Definition video, though, you'll need a projector with a resolution of at least 1,280x720 and either an HDMI port or HDCP-compliant DVI port.

2 Image quality is obviously important, but this is hard to assess from specifications alone. A high contrast ratio (over 500:1) adds depth to the picture and is one tangible benefit of projectors based on digital light processing (DLP) rather than the older LCD technology. The quality of the optics and colour balance cannot be gauged without consulting a review, though.

3 Consider where you'll be using your projector; size and weight are important if the unit will be moved around a lot. You should aim for under 3kg if portability is an issue. Small rooms demand a quiet (sub-33dB) projector and a flexible throw distance; this tells you how close or far away the screen can be. Most projectors can mirror or rotate their image to cope with ceiling mounting or rear projection.

4 Check that the projector can cope with all the signals you might want to feed it. Common video formats are supported by almost all projectors, but high-resolution VGA signals and HDMI aren't. Highly detailed slides will display at their best only on pricier projectors with a 1,280x1,024 native resolution.

5 The brightness of the projector will depend on where you need to use it. Projectors with 1,000 ANSI lumens are fine for darkened rooms, but for meeting rooms you should get a minimum of 1,300 ANSI lumens. Remember brighter projectors will cost more to run as their bulbs need replacing more often. An ECO mode reduces the brightness of the projector but increases bulb life.

DELL
3400MP★★★★★
£666 inc VAT

PRICE CUT!

BEST BUY Dell's 3400MP is tiny, but with 1,500 ANSI lumens it's bright enough for use in a conference room. Colours were even and the brightness and contrast were excellent. It is ideal for use as a business projector. It's well priced, portable and good for presentations. It's also great if you want to take it home to watch movies.



DLP PROJECTOR 1,024x768 native resolution, 1,500 ANSI lumens, 2,100:1 contrast ratio PART CODE 305-3400MP
SUPPLIER Dell 08701 524699
DETAILS www.dell.co.uk
✓ Small and lightweight; low lamp running costs FULL REVIEW May 2006

LG
32LC2D★★★★★
£618 inc VAT

BEST BUY LG's 32LC2D produces beautiful, realistic pictures. Images from our HD movie clips were perfect and the TV displayed every detail flawlessly. Connecting to a PC is easy through D-sub or HDMI and the picture was brilliant. It's excellent value, with a wide range of connections.



32in LCD HD TV VGA, HDMI, component, three SCART, optical S/PDIF, digital tuner PART CODE 32LC2D
SUPPLIER www.dabs.com
DETAILS <http://uk.lge.com> ✓ Superb all-round picture quality; good computer display FULL REVIEW Nov 2006

PANASONIC
PT-AE900E★★★★★
£1,161 inc VAT

BEST BUY The PT-AE900e is an accomplished home cinema projector. The three-LCD projector produces stunning images. The dynamic iris gives it an excellent contrast ratio of 5,500:1. It has a native resolution of 1,280x720, so it supports 720p High Definition video. This has everything that a budding home cinema user could want at an affordable price.



LCD PROJECTOR 1,280x720 native resolution, 1,100 ANSI lumens, 5,500:1 contrast ratio PART CODE PTAE900E
SUPPLIER www.dabs.com
DETAILS www.panasonic.co.uk
✓ Inexpensive; excellent picture quality FULL REVIEW May 2006